WORKING TOGETHER

A FIRST YEAR REVIEW

The Yukon Child Care Strategy

January 1990

Yukon
Health and Human Resources

WORKING TOGETHER

A FIRST YEAR REVIEW

The Yukon Child Care Strategy
January 1990

Honourable Tony Penikett
Minister of Health and Human Resources

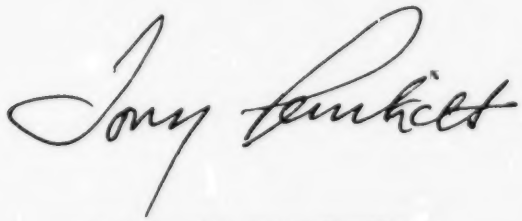
91-02808/

Minister's Message

Yukon
Office of the Minister

The Child Care Strategy was released in January of 1989 outlining a four year plan for the development of child care services in the Yukon. Since that time much has been done to meet the objectives set for the first year. Substantial progress has also been made on plans for the future growth and support of child care services in the 1990s.

We are pleased to bring you this progress report on what has been achieved during the past year. By working together with parents, care-givers and communities we are continuing to meet our commitment to develop quality assured, affordable and comprehensive child care services for the benefit of all Yukoners.



Honourable Tony Penikett
Minister,
Health and Human Resources

Contents

The Child Care Strategy

Year One in Review 1

Improvements to Yukon Child Care

Child Care Start-Up 2

Child Care Subsidy 3

Child Development 4

Child Care Training And Development 5

Child Care Quality Enhancement 6

Child Care Legislation and Program Delivery 7

Working Together 8

Year One in Review

In the spring of 1988 the government released a policy paper outlining eight basic principles for the development of child care services in the Yukon. These principles were strongly endorsed by Yukoners during the child care consultation process which took place in communities throughout the Yukon that summer.

The Principles of Good Child Care

Quality: Child care services should maintain basic standards in programming, staff to child ratios, staff qualifications, health, safety and nutrition.

Parental Choice: The well-being of children is the parents' responsibility. The choice of child care is a parental responsibility.

Accessibility: Child care services should be available to all families regardless of income, employment status or geographic location.

Affordability: Services should be affordable. Cost should not be a barrier to access.

Comprehensive Service: A wide range of services should be available. A comprehensive child care program will provide for infants, preschoolers, school-age children and children with special needs. The range of service must consider such needs as shift-work, part-time work, after-school care, respite care and seasonal work..

Government Responsibility: It will take active government participation to develop and implement a complete network of child care services in the Yukon.

Accountability: Regular monitoring and financial accountability should be provided to parents and other taxpayers. Licensing is the best way to make sure that these standards are met.

Non-Profit vs Profit: The best use must be made of public funds. During the consultation process the majority of Yukoners supported non-profit child care.

In January 1989 "Working Together", the Yukon's Child Care Strategy, was tabled in the legislature. The paper established a four year plan for the development of child care services in the Yukon.

During the first year of the plan the Yukon government, working together with parents, care-givers and communities, has made significant progress in carrying out the strategy. It has also established clear guidelines for the further growth of child care services over the next three years.

The following sections are a progress report on work completed in the first year of the strategy.

Child Care Start-Up

The child care capital development program was started in April of 1987. The program provides grants to assist with capital costs related to the creation of new licensed services and the improvement of existing services.

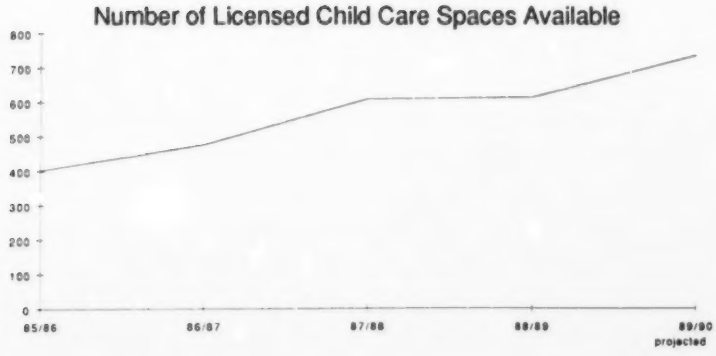
Progress made since January 1989:

- The child care capital development program was used to support a number of new licensed non-profit child care services, particularly in underserved areas. Some 82 new spaces were created in Whitehorse with an additional 57 new spaces in other communities for a total of 139 new spaces throughout the Yukon in 1989. This brings the total number of licensed spaces to 700. The objective for 1989 of creating one hundred new spaces was exceeded.

- The scope of the child care capital development program was broadened to provide funding for school age programs, pre-school programs, organizational support, start-up operating capital, and equipment required by special needs children.

- Three community based pre-school programs designed to stimulate the social, emotional and intellectual development of preschoolers of stay-at-home parents, received funding assistance.

- A 36 space school age program in Whitehorse received funding assistance for start-up and ongoing operations for after-school care.



- The funding guidelines of the child care development program were amended to include assistance to profit based child care centres that are in the process of converting to a non- profit structure.

- Policy is now being created to ensure that child care centres are considered in the planning of future government buildings.

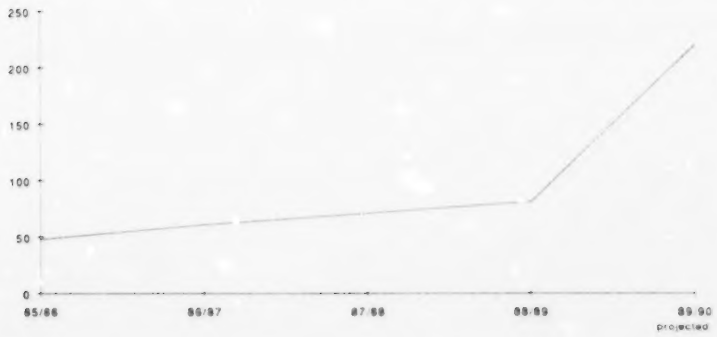
Child Care Subsidy

The child care subsidy program was established in 1981 to provide financial assistance for low income families to help offset the cost of licensed child care services. An income test based on family composition, residential location and family income is used to determine the amount of child care subsidy.

Progress made since January 1989:

- The introduction of an enriched child care subsidy program has increased the number of eligible families and now recognizes the cost-of-living differences between communities.
- The ceiling on financial support for infant care and special needs spaces was raised from $400.00 per month to $450.00 per month.
- The child care subsidy program was revised so that child care operators are paid in advance for child care services.
- Alterations to the social assistance program now allow parents to receive assistance if they choose to remain home to care for their pre-school children.
- During 1989, 85% of subsidy recipients were single parents.

Average Number of Child Care Subsidy Recipients per Month



Child Development

The Child Development Centre has operated for 10 years with funding from the Department of Health and Human Resources. Its funding base has now been increased and its scope of activities has been broadened to include a number of new services.

Progress made since January 1989:

- A territory-wide child development service was started for special needs pre-school children in three communities. Future outreach programming for Yukon communities will include speech and language therapy, occupational and physical therapy, individual assessments and programming and follow-up services as provided by the Child Development Centre.

- A program is in place to support pre-school children with special needs in licensed child care services. The number of children involved in this program will increase over the next few years.

- A model classroom was established at the Child Development Centre to integrate children with special needs with non-handicapped children. This classroom will be used for training child care workers and parents.

- A mobile resource centre is being created to provide specialized toys and learning aids for care givers and families.

- The Child Development Centre was relocated to a new facility in September of 1989.

Child Care Training and Development

The Yukon Government is responding to the need for properly trained and qualified child care professionals. For the past seven years a part-time early childhood development course has been offered at Yukon College. The program is now being offered to an increased number of students on a full time basis in Whitehorse and on a part-time basis in two Yukon communities.

Progress made since January 1989:

- An early childhood development course has been offered at Yukon College on a full time basis since January of 1989.
- The federal government has declared that there is a shortage of child care workers in the Yukon. As a result students enrolled in the early childhood development program may now qualify for funding assistance from Canada Employment and Immigration.
- Starting in January 1990 an introductory early childhood development course will be offered in Dawson City and Faro. These programs will be sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Resources.
- The Department of Health and Human Resources sponsored two part-time early childhood development courses in Whitehorse at Yukon College.
- A child-related first aid course was held for family day home and child care centre operators.
- The Child Development Centre in now in the process of creating a specialized resource library.
- A licensing manual was developed to assist family day home and child care centre operators through the licensing process.
- A manual was written to help set up after-school care programs.
- The Council for Yukon Indians received a grant from the federal government to develop culturally appropriate curriculum for Indian child care.

Child Care Quality Enhancement

The operating and maintenance grant program was established in July of 1986 to assist child care centres. The program was expanded in December of 1987 to include family day homes. Funds from this program are intended to offset the day-to-day operating costs associated with running child care and family day home programs and facilities.

Progress made since January 1989:

- The first phase of a child care worker wage survey was completed. The survey will be used to revise the operating and maintenance grant program to increase the wages of child care workers. Further work on this initiative is in progress.

- Funding was introduced to support pre-school and after-school programs.

- Funding was continued during 1989 for facility improvements and to provide equipment to child care centres and family day homes to enhance programs already in operation.

- The Yukon Child Care Association received a three year grant from the federal government to develop a family resource centre to support families, children and the child care community.

Child Care Legislation & Program Delivery

The Day Care Ordinance was passed in 1979 and a set of governing regulations was established. They were amended in 1986 to include separate regulations for family day homes and day care centres.

Progress made since January 1989:

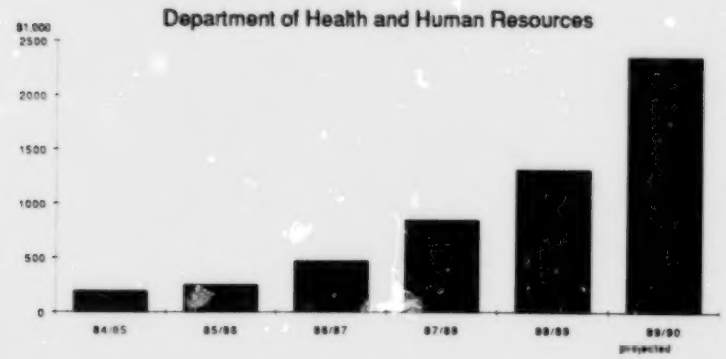
- Interested parties were consulted in the summer of 1989 on the creation of a comprehensive child care act. The new act has since been developed and will be presented to the legislature in January of 1990.

- A new child care services unit was established within the Department of Health and Human Resources to support the growing child care system in the Yukon.

Working Together

Significant progress has been made on the development and support of child care services throughout the Yukon in 1989. The government will continue to work with families and care-givers throughout the Yukon to build on the accomplishments of year one of the Child Care Strategy. Together we can create a quality, affordable, comprehensive child care program to meet the needs of Yukoners.

Total Child Care Expenditures



If you would like more information about anything mentioned in this progress report please contact:

Debbie Mauch
Supervisor
Child Care Services
Department of Health and Human Resources

(403) 667-3002
or toll-free from Yukon communities
1-800-661-0408 Ext. 3002